United Nations A/66/725–S/2012/123

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
2 March 2012
English
Original: Arabic

General Assembly
Sixty-sixth session
Agenda item 36
The situation in the Middle East

Security Council
Sixty-seventh year

Identical letters dated 27 February 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the position of Lebanon, in preparation for the comprehensive assessment that the Secretary-General will present in his forthcoming report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 36, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nawaf **Salam**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the identical letters dated 27 February 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Position of Lebanon in preparation for the comprehensive assessment that will be presented by the Secretary-General in his forthcoming report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)

In preparation for the comprehensive periodic assessment that will be presented by the Secretary-General in his forthcoming report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), Lebanon wishes to stress that from the day resolution 1701 (2006) was adopted, Israel has failed to honour its obligation to implement it or to withdraw from all occupied Lebanese territory, and has persisted in violating on a daily basis both the provisions of the resolution and Lebanese sovereignty, thereby ensuring that no progress has been made in the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) with respect to obliging Israel to withdraw from all Lebanese territory and cease its infractions. Lebanon would like to draw attention to the following:

1. Lebanon reiterates its commitment to resolution 1701 (2006) and calls on the international community to bring pressure to bear on Israel to fulfil its obligation to implement that resolution in full.

2. Since the last assessment, the Israeli army has continued to violate Lebanese sovereignty and all provisions of resolution 1701 (2006). Those violations include the following:

(a) During the reporting period, the Israeli enemy army continued to violate the sovereignty of Lebanese territory, airspace and territorial waters, committing 342 air violations, 79 land violations and 22 sea violations, bringing the number of violations committed by Israel since the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006) to some 9,611. Those violations flagrantly flout Lebanese sovereignty and the provisions of resolution 1701 (2006), which calls for full respect for the Blue Line. Lebanon therefore calls upon the international community to bring pressure to bear on Israel and oblige it to cease its daily violations of Lebanese sovereignty and to respect the international resolutions adopted by the United Nations. Lebanon absolutely rejects any attempt to link those violations to claims of arms smuggling: none of the Secretary-General's reports on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) has made any reference to indications that arms are being smuggled in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Furthermore, all arms that have been seized are remnants of the war which Israel waged against Lebanon in the summer of 2006. It must again be underlined that the Lebanese Army and security apparatus have made no reports on incidents of arms smuggling since the date the Secretary-General submitted his last report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) to the Security Council.

(b) Lebanon notes yet again that Israel constantly threatens Lebanon, most recently in the statement made on 22 February 2012 by the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, in which he threatened to attack and destroy Lebanon, saying

that on the new world map there would be no State called Lebanon. Israel also conducts hostile activities north of the Blue Line, deep within Lebanese territory, in flagrant violation of resolution 1701 (2006). The most blatant of those activities was the installation of the spying networks that were uncovered in recent months, which were working in Lebanese territory on behalf of Israel. Furthermore, on 29 November 2011, Israel fired four mortar rounds into the Lebanese territory between the towns of Rumaysh and Hanin, and on 2 December 2011 it blew up the spying apparatus which it had earlier put in position inside Lebanese territory, in Wadi al-Ghar on the outskirts of the towns of Dayr Kifa and Srifa.

(c) UNIFIL continues to exert all possible efforts to ensure the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from the area known as B14, namely, the Lebanese part of the village of Ghajar and the uninhabited area adjacent to it, and the Lebanese Government continues to cooperate with the Force towards that objective. Despite those efforts, the Israeli army continues to occupy the aforementioned area and to prevent the Lebanese Army from using the SD1 road adjoining that area, despite the fact that the Lebanese Army has agreed to the security arrangements proposed by UNIFIL with respect to that road. That represents a flagrant contravention of the obligation of the Israeli enemy army under resolution 1701 (2006) to withdraw immediately and unconditionally behind the Blue Line. Israel's procrastination with respect to withdrawal from the area known as B14 indicates that it has no desire to comply with resolution 1701 (2006), and leads us to wonder just how serious Israel is about compliance with the resolution and the extent to which the Security Council is able to compel Israel to end that occupation. The international community should take action to ensure that Israel withdraws as soon as possible from the Lebanese part of the village of Ghajar and the whole of area B14, particularly as Israel continues to procrastinate. However, that Israeli withdrawal does not represent a concession, but is one of the core provisions of resolution 1701 (2006).

(d) The continued occupation by Israel of the Lebanese Kafr Shuba hills and Shab'a Farms constitutes a threat to stability and security all along the borders, as well as a violation of Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 1701 (2006). Lebanon demands that Israel should completely and unconditionally withdraw from those areas and thereby fully resolve the issue. Lebanon urges the Secretary-General of the United Nations to intensify his efforts to ensure that Israel withdraws from that territory.

(e) Once again, Lebanon reminds the international community that the maps that the Lebanese side received from Israel relating to cluster bombs are incomplete and imprecise. Israel dropped those bombs at random on civilian areas, and they have caused the death or injury of more than 408 persons, including 51 fatalities and 357 injured and disabled. Lebanon yet again underlines the fact that the Government of Lebanon has its doubts about the precision of the maps that it has received from Israel, and has asked for information regarding the dates on which the cluster bombs that were used during the Israeli raids were dropped, together with the quantity and type of those bombs. The Lebanese Army has asked for aerial photographs or video footage of the targeted areas before and after the bombardments. Many Lebanese citizens have died as the criminal outcome of unexploded ordnance and the cluster bombs that have been used by Israel during its attacks on Lebanon, in addition to the numerous crimes that Israel has perpetrated against Lebanon and its citizens. Israel bears complete responsibility for those crimes and should pay appropriate compensation. Lebanon urges the United Nations and donor countries to continue to

address that issue, in order to protect the lives of innocent civilians, and calls for the Lebanon Mine Action Centre to be granted the necessary financial resources to enable it to carry out its mandate.

(f) The Israeli army has continued to use launches to carry out illegal patrols inside Lebanese territorial waters, close to what is known as the "line of buoys" that Israel positioned unilaterally and illegally inside Lebanese territorial waters. Israel fraudulently claims that the aforesaid line approximates the southern borders of Lebanese territorial waters. The Israeli army has also continued to fire warning shots and throw hand grenades at Lebanese fishing vessels, and systematically detonates explosive devices close to the aforementioned Israeli line, inside Lebanese territorial waters. In the twelfth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2010/105), paragraph 29, concern was expressed that such incidents contribute to increasing tension between the parties. Lebanon reiterates that it does not recognize any line that has been imposed unilaterally and considers the Israeli measures to be further violations of Lebanese sovereignty and resolution 1701 (2006). Lebanon therefore further requests the United Nations to authorize UNIFIL to put in position in the correct place a line of buoys that is in keeping with international standards.

3. Lebanon reasserts its position with regard to the delineation of its southern and south-western maritime borders, which it has expressed by depositing with the United Nations maps that include the following:

- A map that delineates the southern maritime border with occupied Palestine of Lebanon's exclusive economic zone and sets forth the geographical coordinates of that border, that were positioned in accordance with international standards.
- Two maps relating to the south-western borders of Lebanon's exclusive economic zone, with tables that set forth the geographical coordinates of those borders.

Furthermore, two letters on this matter were addressed to the Secretary-General on 4 January 2011 and 17 February 2011, in which the Secretary-General was requested to call upon UNIFIL to undertake the delineation of a maritime security border, along the lines of the Blue Line on land, that conforms to the southern and south-western borders of Lebanese territorial waters and of Lebanon's exclusive economic zone. That would be in keeping with the role played by UNIFIL in determining the Blue Line.

In letters to the United Nations Secretary-General dated 20 June 2011 and 3 September 2011, Lebanon expressed its objection, respectively, to the agreement signed by Cyprus and Israel, and to the coordinates which Israel deposited with the United Nations with regard to its exclusive economic zone.

4. The Lebanese Army is continuing to strengthen field and strategic cooperation with UNIFIL.

(a) The continuing coordination between the Lebanese Army and UNIFIL is particularly evident in their joint patrols, joint checkpoints and joint military training operations and exercises. The Lebanese Army ensures the security of UNIFIL convoys travelling to and from Beirut by accompanying those convoys and taking heightened security measures along the road.

(b) Lebanon is following the strategic dialogue and the strategic review of UNIFIL operations and does not believe that the dialogue should lead to any change in the UNIFIL mandate or rules of engagement. In view of the fact that there has been a cessation of hostilities since 2006 but that there has been no movement towards a permanent ceasefire as provided for in resolution 1701 (2006), Lebanon asks that there should be no reduction in the size or strength of UNIFIL.

(c) Israel's claim that weapons are being stockpiled and military installations established in densely populated civilian areas in South Lebanon bears no relation to the truth, and is designed to facilitate the targeting by Israel of innocent Lebanese civilians and justify their slaughter and terrorization, regardless of the fact that all international instruments and, in particular, those of international humanitarian law, outlaw and criminalize the targeting of civilians.

(d) Lebanon continues to participate in tripartite meetings that are held with a view to maintaining peace along the Blue Line. Those meetings are the appropriate place in which to address the latest issues regarding the removal of causes of tension and maintaining the peace in the UNIFIL area of operations and up to the Blue Line. Israel's persistence in resorting to unilateral measures undermines those tripartite meetings and the role of UNIFIL in maintaining the peace in its area of operations. Furthermore, those unilateral measures are intended to raise doubt as to the capacity of the Lebanese armed forces to defend the sovereignty of all Lebanese territory, contrary to the spirit of resolution 1701 (2006).

(e) With respect to the positioning of markers along the Blue Line, Lebanon affirms yet again the agreement that was reached at the tripartite meeting with a view to making progress in and accelerating that operation. Israeli procrastination in that regard raises doubts as to its real intentions. Lebanon, while reaffirming its respect for the Blue Line, stresses that it is a line of withdrawal, not a border line, and urges the United Nations not to permit Israel to exploit that Line and occupy new areas of Lebanon and, in particular, those 13 regions with respect to which Lebanon maintains a claim. It requests that an international observation group should become operational, with a view to reporting any violations of the Armistice line, as was provided for in the specific original mandate set forth in Security Council resolution 128 (1958) dated 11 June 1958, and in keeping with resolution 1701 (2006), paragraph 5.

5. Lebanon stresses the importance of strengthening and raising the level of international assistance in building the capacities of the Lebanese Army and security forces, thereby enabling them to impose peace and security, in accordance with the text of resolution 1701 (2006), and preparing them to perform their duty to defend Lebanese sovereignty and protect the Lebanese people. The Lebanese Army needs reinforcements of arms and ammunition and to acquire more modern means of surveillance and up-to-date communications equipment. It also requires training in the use of all such equipment and apparatus. Currently, the Lebanese Army, in partnership with UNIFIL and in the framework of the strategic dialogue with the Force, is preparing a draft that will specify the requirements that will enable it to gradually take over responsibilities from UNIFIL.

6. At the economic level, we once more support the call that is made to the international community in resolution 1701 (2006) to extend more of the assistance that is necessary for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon. In that connection, we urge States that took part in the Stockholm Conference, Paris III and

the Vienna Conference to honour their commitments. Lebanon greatly appreciates all economic and social programmes and humanitarian assistance that UNIFIL provides to the Lebanese people in its area of operations, including projects that have an immediate impact and emergency medical services.

7. If stability and security are to be enhanced, a move must be made from a situation of cessation of hostilities towards a situation of permanent ceasefire.